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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/812,007	03/26/2004	David L. Robinson	0739D-000105	2659
27572	7590	06/16/2006	EXAMINER	
HARNESSE, DICKEY & PIERCE, P.L.C.			EDEL, JOSEPH F	
P.O. BOX 828			ART UNIT	
BLOOMFIELD HILLS, MI 48303			PAPER NUMBER	
			3636	

DATE MAILED: 06/16/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

<b>Office Action Summary</b>	Application No. 10/812,007	Applicant(s) ROBINSON ET AL.	
	Examiner Joseph F. Edell	Art Unit 3636	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --  
**Period for Reply**

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

#### Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 12 May 2006.  
2a) ☐ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.  
3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

#### Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 10-25 is/are pending in the application.  
4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.  
5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.  
6) ☒ Claim(s) 10, 11, 13, 15-17, 19 and 21-25 is/are rejected.  
7) ☒ Claim(s) 12, 14, 18 and 20 is/are objected to.  
8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

#### Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.  
10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 26 March 2004 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).  
11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

#### Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).  
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:  
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.  
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.  
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).  
\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

#### Attachment(s)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)  | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)                                   | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)             |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____  |

## **DETAILED ACTION**

Applicant's request for reconsideration of the finality of the rejection of the Office Action mailed 13 January 2006 is persuasive and, therefore, the finality of that action is withdrawn and the proposed amendment filed 21 May 2006 has been entered.

### ***Claim Objections***

1. Claims 15 and 25 are objected to because of the following informalities:
  - a. claim 15, lines 1-2, "first housing plate" should read --first housing--;
  - b. claim 25, lines 1-2, "first housing plate" should read --first housing--.

Appropriate correction is required.

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

2. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

3. Claims 10, 15, 16, 21, and 23-25 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over DE Patent No. 25 08 645 to Vollrath in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,024,410 to Yoshida.

Vollrath discloses a seat assembly that is basically the same as that recited in claims 10, 15, 16, 21, and 23-25 except that the assembly lacks a recliner mechanism,

Art Unit: 3636

as recited in the claims. See Figures 1 and 2 of Vollrath for the teaching that the seat assembly has a seatback 1 (see Fig. 1), a headrest assembly 12 supported by the seatback and including a first housing (upper portion of seatback frame 1) fixedly attached to the seatback and including a cross-member 2 fixedly attached thereto, a second housing (interior of headrest - see Fig. 2) rotatably supported by the first housing, and a lock mechanism 5,7 including a coil spring 7 operable to engage the cross-member to restrict rotation of the second housing and disengage the cross-member to permit rotation of the second housing, such that the lock member is spaced apart from the cross-member, the coil spring at least partially surrounds an outer diameter of the cross-member, the first housing includes a pair of flanges (upper ends of seatback frame 1) extending therefrom and fixedly attached to first and second ends of the cross-member, a lever 13 rotatably attached to the cross member via support bar 10 and arms 8,8 and operable to selectively unlock the lock mechanism and permit rotation of the second housing relative to the first housing, and at least one end 6 of the coil spring acts as a biasing member in response to the other end 6 being rotated by the lever 13 to urge the lock member into the locked position. Yoshida shows a seat assembly similar to that of Vollrath wherein the seat assembly has a seat bottom 52 (see Fig. 4), a seatback 51 pivotably supported by the seat bottom, a recliner mechanism (Fig. 1) operable between a locked position restricting rotation of the seatback relative to the seat bottom and an unlocked position permitting rotation of the seatback relative to the seat bottom. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the seat

assembly of Vollrath such that the seat assembly includes a seat bottom pivotally supporting the seatback, and a recliner mechanism operable between a locked position restricting rotation of the seatback relative to the seat bottom and an unlocked position permitting rotation of the seatback relative to the seat bottom, such as the seat assembly disclosed by Yoshida. One would have been motivated to make such a modification in view of the suggestion in Yoshida that the recliner mechanism provides a seatback that is adjustable to desired angular positions.

Please note that claim 23, lines 11-13 does not recite a structural interrelationship between the lock mechanism of the headrest and the recliner mechanism such that Vollrath in view of Yoshida teaches all the limitations of claim 1 as the coil spring would be operable to engage and disengage the cross-member whether the recliner mechanism is in the locked or unlocked position. Also, Examiner reasonably interprets a lever as being a projecting piece by which a mechanism is operated or adjusted, as defined in *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Tenth Edition*.

Although the rotation angle range of the Vollrath's headrest is not specifically recited, modifying the rotation angle range between a fully upright position to a fully dumped position would have been obvious at the time of Applicant's invention because the use of optimum or workable ranges discovered by routine experimentation is ordinarily within the skill of the art. Further, it would have been an obvious matter of design choice to modify the rotation angle range since the Applicant has not disclosed that having the specific material solves any stated problem or is for any particular

Art Unit: 3636

purpose and it appears that the Vollrath's headrest would perform equally well with an well known rotation angle range used in the art.

4. Claims 11, 13, 17, and 19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Vollrath in view of Yoshida as applied to claims 10, 15, 16, and 23-25 above, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,842,738 to Knoll et al.

Vollrath, as modified, discloses a seat assembly that is basically the same as that recited in claims 11, 13, 17, and 19 except that the lever and second housing lack first and second cable seats, as recited in the claims. See Figures 1 and 2 of Vollrath for the teaching that the rods 8,8 of the headrest rotation transmission element include a rod seats. Knoll et al. shows a headrest similar to that of Vollrath wherein the headrest has an adjustment lever 22 (see Fig. 2) and a housing 28 each including cable seats. Knoll et al. teaches that the use of rods and cable are interchangeable transmission elements to control the lock member of a headrest (see column 5, lines 11-15). Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to further modify the seat assembly of Vollrath such that the lever includes a first cable seat and the second housing includes a second cable seat wherein the first and second cable seats are capable of operating to receive first and second cable, such as the headrest disclosed by Knoll et al. One would have been motivated to make such a modification in view of the suggestion in Knoll et al. that rods and cables are well known transmission elements used in headrest lock members.

5. Claim 22 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Vollrath in view of Yoshida as applied to claims 10, 15, 16, and 23-25 above, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,600,240 to Suman et al.

Vollrath, as modified, discloses a seat assembly that is basically the same as that recited in claim 22 except that the second housing lacks a biasing coil spring, as recited in the claim. Suman et al. shows a headrest similar to that of Vollrath wherein the headrest has a lock member coil spring 30 (see Fig. 1) engaging a cross-member 18, and a coil spring 50 biasing the housing into a fully upright position (see column 2, lines 63-68 and column 3, lines 1-3). Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to further modify the seat assembly of Vollrath such that the assembly includes a coil spring capable of operating to bias the second housing into the fully upright position, such as the headrest disclosed by Suman et al. One would have been motivated to make such a modification in view of the suggestion in Suman et al. that the coil spring urges the headrest to the upright position.

***Allowable Subject Matter***

6. Claims 12, 14, 18, and 20 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

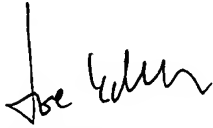
***Response to Arguments***


7. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 10-25 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

***Conclusion***

8. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Joseph F. Edell whose telephone number is (571) 272-6858. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon.-Fri. 8:30am-5:00pm.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

  
Joe Edell  
May 30, 2006

  
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